

WHAT IF I AM NO LONGER IN DCS CUSTODY, BUT I WANT TO GET THESE SERVICES AGAIN?

Go to the closest DCS office. Tell them you used to be in foster care. Ask for voluntary post-custody services. Even if you have turned down these services before, you may still get help. These may be called Independent Living or Transitional Living Services.

You must do this before your 21st birthday in order to be eligible. If you are over 21, you can still call the DCS IL office to see if there are other services that can help you.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

Questions about leaving foster care? Call the DCS Independent Living office at 615-253-0029

WHO ARE WE?

We are just like you—young people who are in foster care or who have recently left foster care. We know how overwhelming it can be, and we decided to develop this brochure to give you information about your rights while in care.

Please visit our website, www.tnfosteryouth.org, for more detailed and up to date information or if you would like to get involved with the Tennessee Youth Advisory Council or another youth council in your area. Remember, you are not alone. You can achieve your goals and dreams.



www.fosteringsuccess.org



Tennessee Youth Advisory Council
1221 16th Avenue South
Nashville, Tennessee 37212
(615) 327-4455
Fax: (615) 329-1444
www.tnfosteryouth.org

WHAT'S MY PLAN?



A guide for foster youth, by foster youth
to planning for your future.

WWW.TNFOSTERYOUTH.ORG

ARE YOU A TEENAGER IN FOSTER CARE?

DCS and your case manager can provide some different supports to you once you turn 14. These will help you prepare for your future and make plans for a successful transition to adulthood. You may need to ask those around you (foster parents judges, family, etc.) to help you make these plans.

You should discuss your plans for your future at your Child & Family Team meetings.

SOME SERVICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE (AGE 14-18):

- › Preparation for college or vocational school
- › Money to help with paying for college tests & applications
- › Money to help with senior year/graduation expenses
- › Tutoring (DCS has tutors that can help you for free)
- › Assistance so that you can play sports and be a part of other clubs and extracurricular activities.
- › Instruction on topics from managing your money to getting a job

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT IF YOU ARE 14 TO 18

You need a plan for when you will leave foster care. Starting at age 14, your Child & Family Team should work together to write down a plan for your future. This is called an Independent Living Plan or “ILP.”

Your Independent Living Plan (ILP) must cover your goals for:

- › School
- › Work
- › Housing
- › Money
- › Connection to caring adults
- › Health Care
- › What you need to learn to live on your own

Your Independent Living Plan should be written by you and your case manager with your Child & Family Team (CFTM). Your CFTM should include people who are important to you like your family, foster parents, teachers, neighbors, friends, minister or faith partner, case manager and other important people in your life. You and your Child & Family Team will update the plan when you go over your Permanency Plan. You should also update the plan whenever something important changes.

Your case manager will have you and the supportive adults in your life take something called a “Life Skills Assessment.” You and your team will use this to develop your plan.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT IF YOU ARE 18 TO 23:

If you are leaving DCS care, you may be eligible to get something called “Post Custody Voluntary Services.” These are sometimes called “Independent Living Services.” To find out if you can get these services, you will need to fill out some papers.

SOME SERVICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE (AGE 18-23):

- › Money to help with college or job training (Chafee or Educational and Training Vouchers)
- › Housing assistance
- › College room and meals
- › Books and school supplies
- › Guidance and support
- › Help getting to college or work (transportation assistance)
- › Help with school, including tutoring

You may be eligible for an Individual Living Allowance, paid directly to you, IF:

- › You want to go to school and further your education
- › You live in Tennessee and left foster care at age 18
- › You are doing well in school
- › You are working as an apprentice, intern or job training program

If you were in the Juvenile Justice system but moved to foster care before 18 you may be able to get these services.